

California State Journal of Medicine

OWNED AND PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
BUTLER BUILDING, 135 STOCKTON STREET, SAN FRANCISCO

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VOL. XVI

AUGUST, 1918

Number 8

NOTE.

All communications, applications and requests for information concerning the Volunteer Medical Service Corps should be made direct to Major J. M. Wheat, U. S. A., Santa Fe Building, San Francisco, Cal.

THE PASSING OF THE DINOSAURS.

Eons ago, in the youth of the world, when the first fossiliferous rocks were in the making, the trilobites were the apex of that pyramid of animal life which lived in the early Paleozoic seas. These ancient animals are described as being quick-witted, capable and agile, in short, as having promise of carrying that germ spark which should eventuate in vertebrate development and the full-flamed glory of man. With this great capability, however, and rich promise of development, the trilobites began to expend themselves in the production of "spines, excrescences and ornamental development of all sorts. Verily the trilobite wasted his substance in riotous living and from that moment his decline was rapid. Trilobites have absolutely vanished from the face of the earth."

In the line through which man developed, we find a certain constant, mysterious instinct which became finally articulate only in man himself. It is, in Stevenson's words, "the thought of duty, the thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbor, to his God; an ideal of decency, to which he would rise if possible; a limit of shame below which, if it be possible, he will not stoop." We see how those phyla which fell short of this idea, perished, or did not advance. We see that man's "ancestral lineage includes no creature which, when tried in the balance, was found wanting. In his germ-plasm there is no tainted heritage from nature's derelicts."

Turning several paleontological chapters ahead after the episode of the trilobites, we come to the mesozoic era of reptilian dominance, a "host of strange, cold-blooded, air-breathing vertebrates," whose huge bodies were wonderfully encased and protected with armor plate, scales and horns. They developed to the utmost the art of physical defense and offense. They multiplied in size and number, conquered and inhabited the earth, the sea and the air. Flying dragons, sea serpents and gigantic land tanks or dinosaurs, were creatures of fact. Not for nothing is it called the Age of Reptiles. Twenty-ton dinosaurs with twenty-ounce brains! And for a time they seemed the utmost achievement of nature. The art of war gone mad—the cold-blooded materialistic dominance of force—the master-race in bulk and ferocity—the sublimation of Power and Might unconquerable—the race of the militaristic dinosaurs.

And then, see the record of history. The path of human progress turned aside. An unwitting lesser scion of the reptilian family carried a mammalian strain to which man owes his origin. Note that it was not the militaristic dinosaur who pushed forward his race and survived. In spite of his physical prowess and wonderful defensive armors and splendidly developed weapons of claw and fang and horn, he had an undeveloped brain space which prevented his recognizing the underlying principle of organic progress, and he was cold-blooded and unmoved by all of what we might call humanistic antecedents which even at that dim day spelled racial life and psychic advance. And he perished and his place was taken by a warm-blooded, duty-recognizing race which led on to man.

For a most instructive and entertaining exposition of this paleontological parable, see Kirtley F.

Mather in the *Atlantic Monthly* for July. Read the story through, remembering that the progress of the race mirrors cosmic progress, and that the progress of a nation mirrors racial progress. Then apply the parable of the passing of the dinosaurs to strange, cold-blooded, air-breathing, vertebrate, militaristic Germany. As happened eons ago, so now will the ancient law operate, and the path of human progress will turn aside from him who denies "the thought of duty; the thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbor, to his God." Militarism cannot win the day because deep biological law will not permit it. The outcome by generations could not be in doubt even though Germany for a generation should rule the world. Yet Germany will never rule the world because she is opposing mankind, mankind's ideal and the great law of nature.

VENEREAL DISEASE.

It is important that the American non-medical public be shaken out of its false modesty regarding venereal disease. This object is being attained to a remarkable degree as a result of the Army and Navy policy combined with the work of the Commission on Training Camp Activities. We are being forced, as a nation, to take a sane and scientific attitude toward the subject. Syphilis and gonorrhea constitute one of our chief sanitary and public health problems. It is right that the facts of their prevalence, spread and danger should be known to every individual. Of all diseases only measles is more prevalent than gonorrhea. Syphilis is practically as common as tuberculosis in the average community. Even in the present war, the two together have often put more men out of active duty than the combined weapons and efforts of the enemy. Can any one, in the face of these facts, deny that one of the most important problems before the medical profession today is the control of venereal disease?

False modesty and lack of instruction and discussion are responsible for much of the present ill-favored situation. Ignorance of the problem of prostitution is another fault with serious consequences. Among the leaders in the new propaganda against venereal disease is the American Social Hygiene Society, with headquarters in New York, which issues a monthly *Social Hygiene Bulletin*. This Bulletin should be in the reception room of every physician.

It deserves reiteration that the control of venereal disease is among the leading emergencies in the United States at this time. It is of such importance in the first place because of military exigency, and, in the second place, because of its personal and public health importance to the American people. It is no longer scientific or progressive to say that this ancient pest and twin sister of booze cannot be exterminated. Even more certain than the eradication of alcohol as a beverage, may become the eradication of venereal disease, provided proper methods of campaign are adopted.

The Government has promulgated such methods of campaign and they are epitomized in the pro-

gram of the Division of Social Hygiene of the War Department's Commission on Training Camp Activities. This program is based on educational propaganda on the one hand, and absolute increasing repression of prostitution on the other. It is associated with the abolition of alcohol as a drink in Army and Navy. Three sections of work have been outlined under the Division of Social Hygiene, and are being vigorously prosecuted. Of these the first is concerned directly with the Army and Navy. It is the object here to insure that no man shall contract venereal disease through ignorance. Education, safeguarding and cure are the watchwords. Selected lecturers present stereopticon lectures following a carefully prepared syllabus. These lectures describe the serious inroads of venereal disease on military efficiency, and the results to the victim and his family. The dangerous character of all prostitutes and loose women is emphasized, together with the healthiness of continence. The special temptations and physical hardships, particularly at the front, are discussed, and also common-sense ways of avoiding trouble and reducing temptation. Stress is laid on the positive motives for a clean life, such as decency, self-respect, efficiency and economy, reputation, respect for women, pride of family and race in the past and future, and, finally, patriotism.

The fact remains, however, that the sources of venereal infection are under civilian control and success of the Government program demands co-operation and sympathetic assistance from all patriotic men and women. The Division of Social Hygiene therefore devotes the second section of its activities to men's work. It is the endeavor to survey vice conditions in civil communities adjacent to camps and then to arouse the upright and patriotic men of these communities to improve these conditions and aggressively repress prostitution. They are shown that it is vital to the defense of the nation, as proved by war conditions, to combat prostitution and venereal disease, and that what is absolutely necessary for the defense of the nation is also necessary in defense of the home.

The third section of work deals with women's work. Among the numerous activities outlined under this heading, is a program of study for women's organizations and clubs. Among the topics suggested for frank and fearless discussion are: A, repression of prostitution with provision for feeble-minded prostitutes, medical treatment of the diseased, training and guidance of those who can be persuaded to earn an honest living; B, local legislation to enable health authorities to deal effectively with this hitherto neglected community health problem; C, emphasis on social standards, scientific basis for single standard of morality, and the many other economic questions involved; D, dissemination of the necessary facts about venereal diseases to demonstrate their seriousness and to dispel the enormous ignorance and indifference still existing about them. Such a program as this could be taken up with advantage by the women of every town in California, and physicians could well make it their patriotic duty to stimulate such studies.